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# Calling for the Super Citizen: Citizenship ceremonies in the UK and Germany as techniques of subject-formation

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## Abstract

Migration and citizenship studies tend to conceive of naturalization and of citizenship ceremonies as highly ambivalent procedures. They simultaneously include and exclude migrants by granting full membership to certain migrants while separating them from national-born and other migrant citizens. Yet, existing studies with their focus on the inclusion/exclusion divide tend to overlook another key dimension of citizenship ceremonies. I argue that citizenship ceremonies should be understood as techniques of subject-formation that aim at the modification and optimization of the self-understanding and behaviour of newly-naturalized citizens by confronting them with specific expectations. Based on a Critical Discourse Analysis of ceremony speeches observed in four locations in the United Kingdom and in Germany, this article demonstrates that local state representatives encourage naturalized citizens to transform themselves to become a political, economic and cultural asset to the nation-state. In other words, ceremony speakers suggest that naturalized citizens adopt a specific kind of subjectivity which I term—in allusion to its overstraining character—the Super Citizen. My analysis shows that, although the speech is the least regulated element in both the British and the German ceremonies, the subjectivity of the Super Citizen crosses regional and national borders as speakers in all four locations engaged in the call for the Super Citizen. This finding not only questions the predominant categorization in the literature of the UK and Germany as representing ‘civic’ versus ‘ethnic’ models of citizenship. It also points to the transnational prevalence of neo-liberal and neo-national discourses in which the Super Citizen subjectivity is deeply entangled.

**Keywords:** citizenship ceremonies, migration, naturalization, subject-formation regime, neo-liberalism, neo-nationalism

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## 1. Introduction

One morning in October 2012, around 40 candidates and guests gathered in the Council Chamber of the London Borough of Brent to receive their certificates of naturalization as British citizens. There, the head registrar addressed the ‘new’ British citizens in his ‘welcome’ speech with the following words:

We want you to respect being British, [...] to respect the values of this country—as I’m sure you do—but also to retain your own cultural identities because that’s also incredibly important, that’s what makes Britain incredibly special and we want to celebrate that. (Brent: 9 October 2012)

At a similar event held in Dresden, Germany in August 2013, several hundred naturalized citizens and their guests assembled in the plenary room of the Saxon state parliament and were addressed by the Saxon Foreigner Commissioner with these remarks:

A special welcome to our new Germans. We are pleased that you now fully belong to us. We are also glad about the treasures that you have brought us, your diverse life experiences, your hopes and energies. You enable us to be successful in the future. [...] Cherish your own diversity and remain true to your diverse selves. Recognize the strengths and weaknesses of your different cultures. [...] Our country needs bridge builders (*Brückenbauer*) such as you. (Dresden: 31 August 2013)<sup>1</sup>

Citizenship ceremonies are collective events that legally or symbolically conclude the procedures through which non-national citizens can apply for full legal membership of the nation-state, also known as naturalization. Nowadays, such events are found across the Western world and beyond, and they vary in scale, length and frequency. However, whether held in registration offices, town halls or plenary rooms of local parliament buildings, they all bring together groups of successful candidates who have undergone the scrutiny of the state and been found worthy of formal membership of the national community. These candidates are to be addressed one last time in the lengthy naturalization procedure by agents of the state. As the two extracts included above each suggest, the ceremony speakers not only ‘welcomed’ naturalized citizens to the UK and Germany respectively. Rather, they expressed a specific call to newly-naturalized citizens to think of themselves as an asset to the newly-acquired state, and to model themselves accordingly. This is surprising, because the speech is the least regulated element, both in the voluntary ceremonies in Germany and in the obligatory ceremonies in the UK. The speeches suggest that citizenship ceremonies not only include new members into the nation-state, but also that they are expected to produce a specific subjectivity. In other words, citizenship ceremonies are part of a wider subject-formation regime.

Citizenship ceremonies are a significant element of migration regimes because naturalization offers to individual migrants the most secure status (Butler and Spivak 2007), the best access to human rights (van Waas 2011), and a means by which to evade the global ‘birthright lottery’ (Shachar 2009) and the inequalities of the contemporary world system. An emerging body of anthropological and sociological literature has analysed citizenship ceremonies as ambivalent moments of inclusion and exclusion (see, e.g., Damsholt 2009; Fassin and Mazouz 2009; Verkaaik 2010; Hagelund and Reegård 2011; Jakob 2012; Khor

2012; Byrne 2014; Ossipow and Felder 2015; Schwarz 2016). However, as this article will demonstrate, the ceremonies not only draw boundaries between citizens and non-citizens, but attempt to shape the latter in their self-understanding and actions. In requiring, or inviting, naturalized citizens to submit themselves to speeches held at citizenship ceremonies, citizenship ceremonies provide a central platform for subject-formation attempts.

This article applies a new theoretical framework to the research of naturalization procedures and citizenship ceremonies, which involves analysing them as techniques of subject-formation (cf. Foucault 1983; Rose 1999; Bröckling 2007). While the subject-formation approach accounts for inclusionary and exclusionary effects, it also has the advantage of moving beyond the narrow focus on inclusion and exclusion. In order to do so, it places the main focus on how ceremonies attempt to modify naturalized citizens and entice them to modify themselves. A Critical Discourse Analysis of speeches observed at citizenship ceremonies in four specific local authorities in the UK and Germany enables an examination of whether the subjectivity or subjectivities that ceremonies attempt to forge are potentially a cross-regional and cross-national phenomenon. Indeed, even though the UK and Germany are typically cited to represent contrasting models of ‘civic’ versus ‘ethnic’ citizenship (see, e.g., Koopmans et al. 2005; Diez and Squire 2008; Meer and Modood 2012; Baldi and Goodman 2015), the ceremonies observed in all four research locations call for a similar type of subject, the Super Citizen. The Super Citizen subjectivity expresses the idealized figure of the naturalized citizen who, in the eyes of local state representatives, personifies a combined potential to become a political, economic, and cultural asset to the nation-state, and should develop her/his own aspirations accordingly. As such, the Super Citizen forms an instrumental part of maintaining a specific self-image of the nation-state as an open and diverse society based on a competitive market economy and liberal democracy. Moreover, it encourages naturalized citizens to develop a new ‘moderate’ nationalism as a response to new far-right nationalism.

The argument begins by outlining how the subject-formation framework can be meaningfully applied to the study of naturalization (section 2.1) and how citizenship ceremonies were introduced by the national government in the UK and by local authorities in Germany (section 2.2). It then discusses the comparative research design and how the audio-recordings of ceremony speeches were explored using the method of Critical Discourse Analysis (section 3). Referring to extracts from such ceremony speeches, the article presents three main features of the Super Citizen subjectivity as a political, economic and cultural asset to the nation-state (section 4). It concludes by highlighting the analytical value of the Super Citizen as a trans-national subjectivity with some local and national nuances.

## 2. Citizenship ceremonies as techniques of a subject-formation regime

### 2.1 Conceptualizing naturalization as a subject-formation regime

Within citizenship and migration studies, citizenship ceremonies have been analysed as ambivalent rituals of migrants’ inclusion and exclusion in the nation-state (see, e.g., Damsholt 2009; Fassin and Mazouz 2009; Verkaaik 2010; Hagelund and Reegård 2011;

Jakob 2012; Khor 2012; Byrne 2014; Ossipow and Felder 2015; Schwarz 2016). On the one hand, the ceremonies represent the moment of the full legal or symbolic inclusion of persons previously deemed ‘foreign’ and ‘alien’ to the nation-state. On the other hand, the ceremonies physically separate non-national from national citizens who are not subjected to such a ritual when receiving their citizenship, which happens automatically at birth, and who are therefore largely absent from the ceremony halls with the exceptions of the organizers and speakers. Moreover, the latter tend to idealize and exoticize the newly-naturalizing migrants as ‘archetypal citizen[s]’ (Byrne 2014: 41), that is, as citizens by choice whose ‘job is to remind the native-born what [the nation] stands for’ (Aptekar 2012: 946).

These are important observations, yet it is hardly surprising that citizenship ceremonies selectively include and exclude migrants. For, if we understand citizenship as ‘powerful instrument of social closure’ (Brubaker 1992: 23) then naturalization is a tool through which states regulate migrants’ (or their descendants’) access to full membership. As one (albeit final) element of the overall citizenship admission procedure, citizenship ceremonies are just another reminder of the internal hierarchies of nation-states which privilege national-born citizens over foreign-born ones. Citizenship ceremonies—and naturalization procedures in general—crystallize the contradictory relationship of the nation-state towards migration in that they are designed to conclude the processes through which nation-states incorporate migrants, and yet migrants seeking citizenship status challenge the ideology of nation-states, defined as associations primarily through birthright membership. More significantly, citizenship ceremonies do not only (re)draw the boundaries between automatically and discretionarily recognized members of the nation-state (cf. Brubaker 1989). Rather, through institutionalized appeals and pleas directed at ‘new citizens’, they attempt to optimize the potential contributions to the nation-state of individual applicants by expressing expectations that they contribute to its democracy, economy and cultural diversity. The analytical focus on the dialectics of inclusion and exclusion adopted by existing studies neglects to consider that, from a Foucauldian perspective, ‘power [...] also can act positively to produce and to define’ (Bevir 1999: 349).

Instead, the subject-formation approach moves beyond the inclusion/exclusion lens by shifting the focus onto the following research questions: do naturalization procedures construct a particular subjectivity (or several subjectivities); and if so, which one(s), with which features, and how—through which problematizations, rationalities, authorities and techniques—is this subjectivity being constructed? The subject-formation approach deployed in this analysis originates in Michel Foucault’s lectures on governmentality in the 1970s (Foucault 2007, 2010) and his later historical work on subjectification or subject-formation (Foucault 1983, 1988a, 1988b). Subsequently, Foucault’s work was developed and applied in sociological empirical analysis; for example, by Nikolas Rose in the field of psychological sciences and professions (Rose 1999, 1998) and by Ulrich Bröckling, who examined economic theories, management literature, and welfare policies (Bröckling 2007, 2012, 2016). In opposition to a ‘distinctively modern or Western understanding of the “self” as a homogenous, bounded, unitary entity’ (Brubaker and Cooper 2000: 17; cf. Bevir 1999: 347), the subject (or subjectivity) is understood in this approach as a ‘gerundive—not pre-existent and waiting to be discovered (*vorfindbar*) but to be produced (*her-vorzubringend*)’ (Bröckling 2012: 132). In this sense, the subject functions as a ‘call’

(*Anrufung*)—suggesting to the individual the direction towards which s/he shall be modified and modify her/himself—and as a ‘vanishing point’ (*Fluchtpunkt*), because the end-point of these attempts can never be reached (Bröckling 2012: 132–4).

In the case of citizenship admission, naturalization procedures do not simply seek to achieve an ideal vision; for example, of the features that, in the eyes of the state, mean that someone deserves citizenship. Rather, they produce a ‘regulatory ideal’ (Rose 1998: 23, emphasis added) that suggests to individuals that they assess themselves in relation to whether they match the features, how to improve themselves in order to qualify, and when to think of themselves as deserving of citizenship. This formative aspect of subject-formation regimes makes them highly powerful and efficacious. Subject-formation regimes exercise power because they ‘structure the field of other possible actions’ (Foucault 1983: 222). This also points to the neo-liberal aspect of subject-formation regimes, especially those designed by the state such as citizenship admission procedures. The ‘neo-liberal state’ is not in retreat, but has a key role more generally which is ‘both active and activating’ (Bröckling 2016: 47). This referral of responsibility onto applicants, or ‘responsibilization’ of new citizens, ‘is not a simple “downsizing” of the state, but requires a new kind of activist government to create freedom and those capable of inhabiting it’ (Rose 1999: xxiii).

Applying the subject-formation framework to the study of citizenship admission procedures offers the advantage of being able to create an analytical distance to the internal logic of nation-state policies. While the subject-formation approach conceptualizes naturalization as a practice that divides citizens by birth from citizens by application, a practice originally invented because non-citizens have ‘come to be seen as problematic’ (Rose 1999: xi) in the global order of nation-states, it further examines which subjectivity(ies) naturalization produces, and how it does so. Adapting some of the elements proposed by Rose (1999: xi; 1998: 25–7) to the case of naturalization, the subject-formation framework turns the analytical focus onto:

- (1) *problematizations*, such as statutory requirements that render certain features of a citizenship applicant problematic;
- (2) *rationalities*, that is, concepts and ways of thinking about citizenship that justify the design of naturalization procedures, for instance as a privilege versus entitlement;
- (3) *techniques* or tools for citizenship applicants to optimize themselves; for example, by undergoing citizenship courses, tests and/or ceremonies; and
- (4) *authorities*, that is, the state actors in charge of the implementation of this subject-formation regime, including caseworkers, ceremony organizers, teachers and test administrators, among others.

By focusing its analysis on one of the subject-formation techniques within naturalization regimes, the citizenship ceremonies, this article does not address the questions of intent (why ceremonies were introduced) or assess the success (i.e. what naturalized citizens think about them) of this subject-formation regime. Rather, by focusing on the ceremony speeches, it closely examines the concrete enactment of a key subject-formation technique within the naturalization regime.

## 2.2 Citizenship ceremonies as techniques of subject-formation deployed by the nation-state and local authorities

Citizenship ceremonies represent a significant technique of subject-formation within contemporary naturalization regimes. As Anne-Marie Fortier has argued, citizenship ceremonies operate as ‘governing technologies’ because they create new encounters between ‘agents of the state’ and ‘aspiring citizens’ (Fortier 2017: 4–5). Moreover, unlike citizenship courses and tests at the pre-application stages, ceremonies only assemble the successful, pre-selected candidates who have all passed the scrutiny of the state and been found worthy of state membership—the invitees will never again be summoned to gather together in this form. As the concluding element of the naturalization procedure, citizenship ceremonies provide a final stage for the state to address and act upon this specific group of people. The speeches by organizers and invited guests represent a particularly effective tool through which state representatives can share messages explicitly directed at naturalized citizens, as the extracts at the beginning of the article suggest. The speeches reveal what state representatives expect from newly-naturalized citizens, and how to think of themselves as new members. The ceremony speeches propose ‘self-guidance’, and therefore function as ‘technologies of the self’ (Lemke 2007: 49). They also suggest how the applicants should understand themselves ‘as a part of a social entity, as a part of a nation or of a state’, and can thus be analysed as ‘political technologies’ (Foucault 1988b: 146).

Citizenship ceremonies provide a useful site at which to study the various layers of the state, because citizenship confers membership to the nation-state yet citizenship ceremonies are usually enacted by local state actors, and the degree to which they are regulated by central government varies significantly. In the UK, the Home Office assesses all applications for naturalization as a British citizen. However, since 2004, local authorities’ registration services have been responsible for presenting the naturalization certificate at mandatory citizenship ceremonies. A piece of national legislation (schedule 1(1) of the 2002 Nationality, Immigration and Asylum Act) introduced this statutory requirement. The Home Office (in cooperation with the Local Authorities’ Association) has also produced detailed instructions on the order, content, wording and venue of the ceremonies including a ‘standard ceremony’ (Home Office 2003: 14–19).<sup>2</sup> And yet the Home Office made clear that ‘Government does not wish to be prescriptive about the content of speeches given at any citizenship ceremonies’ (Home Office 2003: 14) and indeed encourages local dignitaries to ‘personalise their speech as they see fit’ (Home Office 2003: 15). In Germany, by contrast, due to the federal state structure, the federal Citizenship Act (*Staatsangehörigkeitsgesetz*, *StAG*) stipulates naturalization requirements; however, the everyday examination and grant of applications lies within the competence of the 16 states (*Bundesländer*). For example, it is at the discretion of the state and municipality as to whether and how citizenship ceremonies are to be held. Unlike in the UK, citizenship ceremonies are not a legal requirement in Germany; consequently, they are not regulated by the federal government. The UK and German citizenship ceremonies are thus both enacted by local state agents, but they represent contrasting structural functions within the naturalization procedure. Citizenship ceremonies are mandatory in the UK, where local authorities implement a national policy designed by the British Home Office, but they are voluntary in Germany and, furthermore, were in fact initiated by local authorities. The



former West German capital city of Bonn, for example, organized citizenship ceremonies as early as the 1980s to celebrate and value the individual applicants' decisions to naturalize despite the lengthy bureaucratic procedure (Topçu 2007: 59). After the German Local Authorities' Association (*Deutscher Städtetag*) repeatedly recommended that ceremonies should be offered, they have been adopted across Germany since the 2000s (Topçu 2007: 59). Despite the structural differences between the two countries, in both cases the speeches represent the element of the ceremony procedure which is least regulated, as even British local authorities have discretion about who they invite to deliver the speech, whether they suggest a template to the speaker, and if so, whether the speaker uses it. Regardless of whether the local or national level of government stipulated the ceremonies, their concrete implementation crucially depends on the role of locally embedded 'street-level bureaucrats' (Lipsky 1980).

### 3. Research design and methodology

The research presented here forms part of a larger study of naturalization procedures in the UK and Germany in the form of a multi-sited state ethnography that examines various events, such as citizenship courses, tests, ceremonies and office appointments; the actors involved in citizenship admission including state officials, teachers, legal advisers, politicians, and guest speakers; and the citizenship applicants themselves (Badenhoop forthcoming). The present article focusses on the ceremony speeches, which are the least regulated element of citizenship ceremonies in the UK and Germany despite the higher degree of regulation in the British case, as was outlined above. Naturalization processes are bureaucratic application procedures regulated above all by the nation-state. However, the nation(-state) is not regarded as a 'container' or the 'natural unit of analysis' here (Amelina et al. 2012: 2–3). The research was conducted in several local authorities within the UK and Germany with the aim of reflecting intra-national differences and to reduce the risk of methodological nationalism (cf. Wimmer and Glick Schiller 2002). The four specific locations in this research were selected with the aim of representing a 'centre' and 'periphery' within each of the two nation-states, to use terminology from post-colonial studies (cf. Reuter and Villa 2010), considering socio-economic structural features such as the ethnic make-up of the population and regional prosperity (purposive sampling, cf. Bryman 2016: 408). Thus, the London Borough of Brent in the UK and the city-state of Hamburg in Germany each represent ethnically super-diverse, thriving metropolitan contexts which are pioneering pro-active approaches towards migration and naturalization. The northern English town of Burnley and the eastern German city of Dresden, on the other hand, are located in ethnically less diverse, structurally disadvantaged contexts which are struggling to adapt to the inclusion of newcomers, as indicated by attacks on migrants and far-right voting behaviour.

This article analyses 19 speeches made at citizenship ceremonies in the two British locations and 12 speeches made in the two German locations. The speeches were observed and audio-recorded at a total of 23 citizenship ceremonies, including 19 in Britain (12 in Brent; seven in Burnley) and four in Germany (two in Dresden; two in Hamburg) between June 2012 and August 2013. The imbalance between the number of observations in the UK



and Germany results from the structural differences outlined above. Since the citizenship ceremonies are a statutory requirement in the British naturalization regime, they are held more frequently (on a weekly or monthly basis for 20 to 40 citizenship candidates) than the voluntary ceremonies in Germany, which are organized only a few times or just once per year for several hundred naturalized citizens at a time.

The advice and expectations formulated in speeches were analysed via the Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) method developed by Ruth Wodak and Norman Fairclough, who propose an understanding of discourse as both language and the institutional context of its production (Fairclough 1995: 70–71). This definition of discourse as a ‘social practice’ assumes that individual speech acts and the structural context in which they occur mutually shape each other (Keller 2007: 28). It therefore allows for the critical analysis of how both individual agency and structural constraints reinforce or challenge existing power relations and social orders (Keller 2007: 28–30). In the concrete analysis of citizenship ceremony speeches, CDA therefore supports the subject-formation approach by examining how, and more specifically through which forms of address, categorizations and conceptualizations, individual speech acts foresee a particular subjectivity for newly-admitted citizens. This can also identify the place in the structural hierarchy between national-born and non-citizens which is granted to naturalized citizens who, by definition, trouble the global birthright order by asking for an alternative nationality to that assigned to them at birth. The following section first distinguishes the Super Citizen concept from existing usage in the literature before going on to demonstrate the core features of the Super Citizen subjectivity with key quotations from ceremony speeches.

## 4. The Super Citizen subjectivity

The concept of Super Citizen in this article refers to a subjectivity that sustains the global order of nation-states which privileges citizens by birth over naturalized and non-citizens. In political discourse and social scientific analysis, the term ‘super citizen’ has rarely been used, and when it has, this has only been with limited explanatory value. For example, in a plenary discussion held on 16 September 2008, Wolfgang Wieland, then a member of the German *Bundestag* for the Green Party, criticized the proposed introduction of a federal German citizenship test. By comparing the naturalization test to the German spin-off of the popular British television competition ‘Pop Idol’, Wieland suggested that such a test would create a ‘ridiculous [...] new game: “Germany’s super citizen”’ (*Deutschland sucht den Superstaatsbürger*).<sup>3</sup> In the social sciences, Ricky van Oers picked up this catchphrase in her analysis of citizenship tests in the Netherlands, the UK and Germany without developing it further (Oers 2014: 67). In the sociology of rights, Kate Nash referred to ‘super-citizens’ as a privileged position *within* full legal membership status from which a migrant can choose at any time whether it is more convenient for them to return to their secure ‘home’ state (Nash 2009: 1073). For Nash, the word ‘super’ refers to the extraordinary privileges that certain citizens of a cosmopolitan elite enjoy.

By contrast, the Super Citizen subjectivity described in this article refers to a different social phenomenon. It captures the extraordinary efforts and self-modification required from, and expected of, citizens by application as opposed to citizens by birth if they are to

attain full legal membership *in the first place*, a phenomenon which citizenship and migration studies have only just begun to describe. For example, Bridget Anderson argued that migration policies, laws, and media portrayal in the UK have created a hierarchy chaired by ‘good citizens’ such as ‘politicians’, ‘researchers’ and ‘campaigners’ at the top, who hold both citizenship status and its associated liberal values, followed by ‘failed citizens’ such as ‘criminals’ and ‘benefit scroungers’, who fail to display the correct values, plus ‘non-citizens’ including ‘foreigners’ and ‘immigrants’, who lack formal membership status (Anderson 2013: 3–5). The ‘failed citizens’ and ‘non-citizens’ in Anderson’s typology ‘must endlessly prove themselves marking the borders’ and ‘dissociate themselves’ if they are to obtain provisional recognition as ‘tolerated citizens’ and, in attempting to do so, they may turn into ‘guardians of good citizenship’ (Anderson 2013: 6).

Similarly, in her comparison of speeches held at US citizenship ceremonies in the 1950s/60s and early 2000s, Sofya Aptekar observed a shift from the portrayal of migrants as a ‘threat’ and even as potential traitors during the Cold War to conceptualizations as morally superior ‘supercitizens’ who are ‘enhancing and enriching’ the nation-state at the beginning of the twenty-first century (Aptekar 2015: 114–15). The present article proposes a more profound theorization of the Super Citizen concept. The Super Citizen discussed here is neither ‘normative’ as the figure of the ‘good citizen’ (Anderson 2013: 4) nor a label for a specific ‘discourse’ deployed at citizenship ceremonies (Aptekar 2015: 119). Rather, it is a subjectivity that is structurally formed throughout naturalization procedures and, as such, acts as an analytical indicator of a specific subject-formation regime (Badenhoop forthcoming). The term *Super Citizen* was deliberately chosen as it implies an intensification and maximization of efforts and, therefore, the logic of competition that is characteristic of neo-liberal subject-formation regimes (Bröckling 2016). The Super Citizen subjectivity suggests to naturalized citizens that they should become a role model in at least three respects. The Super Citizen is held accountable to contribute to the democratic political system, the capitalist labour market, and the ethnically diverse society, as the following three sections demonstrate in turn.

#### 4.1 The Super Citizen as a political asset in the parliamentary democracy

Firstly, the Super Citizen subjectivity encourages naturalized citizens to participate in politics. Calls to exercise the newly-gained right to vote could be a routine act; for example, when she was the Conservative UK Home Secretary, Theresa May urged naturalized citizens in a written message handed to every successful British candidate along with their certificate of naturalization that: ‘I hope that you will use your vote, take part in the political process, and play an active part in your local communities’ (Home Office, n.d.). The call to vote could also be motivated by concretely upcoming elections: ‘You now have the active and passive right to vote and I do hope that every one of you will make use of it and cast your vote on 22 September at the federal election (*Bundestagswahl*)’ (Dresden: 31 August 2013). As the last quote indicates, the suggestion that new citizens make use of their right to vote referred to the full suffrage. The call to exercise the active vote in elections was routinely made in all the observed ceremonies, either via the UK Home Secretary’s written message or through individual speakers at German ceremonies. However, the passive

aspect of the right to vote, to stand for election, was only exceptionally mentioned in the UK (in only one speech):

And at some point, you could be actually sitting on one of these seats, actually helping your community and being an elected representative of your community. And that's part of why we hold the ceremonies here, too, to ensure you know this isn't just a scary place, *it's somewhere you can aspire to*. (Brent: 9 October 2012, added emphasis)

It is noteworthy that the political aspirations that naturalized citizens should develop were raised merely to the local, less influential level of democratic self-representation in the British case, as the above extract indicates. In Germany, the call to join 'democratic' parties and to stand for election was frequently found, and it extended further, to the national level. It was clearly affirmed that 'we want more people with a so-called migration experience or history in politics, in parliament', as their very low representation in the federal parliament was criticized: 'unfortunately only 3 per cent of the members of the *Bundestag* have a migration background' (Dresden: 31 August 2013). Indeed, naturalized citizens' assumed foreignness and the knowledge that supposedly derived from it was instrumental in this plea to become politically active: 'Do become members of a democratic party. Enrich us with your cosmopolitan perspectives, so that we can gain new insights [...]' (Dresden: 31 August 2013). The assumption that all naturalized citizens will have 'cosmopolitan perspectives' that can be utilized in the public interest points to the second, economic aspect of the Super Citizen.

## 4.2 The Super Citizen as an economic asset in the capitalist market economy

Secondly, the Super Citizen subjectivity reminds naturalized citizens that they are expected to strengthen the economy. The importance of unpaid labour through voluntary work in the informal care and civil society sector was stressed in every ceremony in both countries. Speakers suggested to newly admitted citizens that they might, for example, join the civil fire brigade, help out at school, or assist elderly neighbours:

Since the Olympics last year there has been a boost for voluntary work [...]. So, if you can find some spare hours in probably what are busy lives, you may be able to squeeze some time into serving people in your community. It can be done informally like helping a neighbour with cooking or shopping or taking them to hospital appointments [...]. So, I do hope that you will enable the volunteer spirit to shine. (Burnley: 12 February 2013)

Furthermore, citizenship applicants were regarded as valued highly-skilled workers: 'We need *foreign* specialists in addition to what we can ourselves achieve' and: 'This potential has to be used to the maximum' (Dresden: 31 August 2013, emphasis added). These speech acts reduce 'new citizens' to their workforce to be exploited in the interest of the national economy in a competitive global market. As the local state representatives recommended that naturalized citizens think of themselves as citizens 'by choice', and re-defined the act of

naturalization from a bureaucratic nuisance to an ‘individual contribution’ and a ‘conscious choice’, the characteristics of the individual applicant were literally seen as ‘capital’:

And even if [...] your migration background is often portrayed exclusively as a handicap [...] please recognize that this is a very special capital to be made use of. With your knowledge about other countries and cultures and your potential multi-lingual skills you are predestined to further develop Germany’s partnership links to other regions in the world. (Hamburg: 17 May 2013)

The Super Citizen is a neo-liberal subjectivity because it suggests that naturalized citizens become ‘entrepreneurs’ of themselves (Bröckling 2016). The neo-liberal aspect of the Super Citizen subjectivity turns the (assumed) individual experiences of crossing national, linguistic, and cultural boundaries into the kinds of ‘knowledge’ and ‘skills’ deemed valuable to the self-image of the modern nation-state, made up of an ethnically, culturally, linguistically diverse population which, in turn, enables the nation-state’s global involvement. In return, the state is portrayed as active and offering services specifically to migrant citizens. For example, the state administration in Germany was depicted as a ‘service provider’ (*Dienstleister*) working to accommodate the needs of ‘people who come from other countries’ by pointing to the newly opened ‘Welcome Centre’ in Dresden (31 August 2013). However, the speaker omitted to mention that the controversial ‘Welcome Centres’ established in several German cities including Hamburg and Dresden do not ‘welcome’ all migrants, but only serve legally documented, highly skilled ones with annual incomes exceeding 30,000 Euros (Ludwig 2013). The Super Citizen subjectivity thus reinforces a hierarchy of ‘deservingness’ and merit and it contributes to the discursive maintenance and reproduction of a capitalist economic order in liberal-democratic, diverse nation-states.

### 4.3 The Super Citizen as a cultural asset in the liberal, multicultural society

Thirdly, the Super Citizen subjectivity reminds naturalized citizens that they are expected to enhance the cultural diversity of the society which they have joined. Successful citizenship applicants were generally seen as possessing multiple ‘cultures’, a feature regarded as a benefit which could supply ‘enrichment’. Thus, ceremony participants were urged to maintain and nurture their ‘cultural identities’ in addition to the new British or German identity that they were supposedly adopting through the act of naturalization. The suggestion that they should practise multiple cultures, for example to ‘nurture your own traditions, keep your own language because multilingualism enriches our country’ (Dresden: 16 June 2012), was based on the assumption that the successful applicants had already self-identified with the new state and found a ‘home’ (*Heimat*) in Germany (Hamburg: 17 May 2013), or had become part of the ‘British family’ (Brent: 12 September 2012). The expectation was therefore that naturalized citizens should combine the ‘cultures’ associated with their citizenship of birth and of naturalization:

Today we are not asking you to lose your heritage or country of origin, your language, your culture, your lifestyle. But what we are asking you to do is move forward with the British culture. You are asking to become British here today, so there is something about our culture, our lifestyle, our language that you like. So, we are

asking you to move forward together with both of those cultures. (Brent: 12 September 2012)

Furthermore, the Super Citizen is a neo-national subjectivity because naturalized citizens were asked to develop a new 'moderate' nationalism to fight off new far-right nationalism. In the British case, the neo-nationalism instilled by the ceremonies appeared in the form of a regionalism and royalism, as naturalized citizens were expected to 'catch [...] loyalty' (Burnley: 15 January 2013) to the local state such as the Borough or County, but also to the United Kingdom as represented above all by the Queen. In the German case, the call to naturalized citizens to develop a new nationalism was situated in the context of the recent rise of far-right nationalism. Thus, naturalized citizens were called upon to 'set an example' to 'Neo-Nazis' who stir up racist hate, and to those against whom this hate is directed, following the Saxon Interior Minister:

In these days, when Neo-Nazis once again fuel sentiments against people from other countries and other cultures, I call upon you: Please pass on your experience, set an example, give your fellow country-people (*Landsleute*) a hand! And I make it very clear, this state (*Bundesland*) needs people like yourselves [...]. (Dresden: 31 August 2013)

The literature mainly attributes neo-nationalism to new far-right parties across Europe and to their aggressive responses to immigration (Berezin 2006; Banks and Gingrich 2006). Yet, the neo-nationalism found in ceremony speeches represents a new phenomenon. It is conceived as a solution to these far-right movements. Thus, local state representatives encouraged migrants to develop a new nationalism that is 'compatible with modern liberal-democratic principles' to convince the mistaken far-right supporters that migrants not only 'create challenges but also opportunities' for Germany, as the speaker in Hamburg cited below suggested:

Because 'the migrants' who are so often presented as a problem do not exist as a homogenous collective and 'the Germans' are not a genetically distinguishable race either; 'We Germans' are one people, a diverse people that has always been diverse but that unfortunately seems partly overwhelmed by its increasing diversity nowadays. And yet this could be the starting point for your own involvement to which I would like to encourage you. I would be pleased if in your everyday lives you could demonstrate to your fellow citizens that there are not only problematic cases and that the increasing diversity in Germany does not only create challenges but also opportunities. Take away their fear of foreign domination that seems to be a human instinct and that some deliberately try to fuel. Show them that you consciously opted for Germany with your decision to apply for citizenship. [...] Pride is a difficult topic in this country and that is understandable given the heavy historical burden that weighs on this country and that must forever be a warning to all people around the world. But perhaps you, as new Germans, can make a contribution also in this sense and assist your people with fresh perspectives and impulses to yet develop a modern, moderate and healthy national pride that is, in my opinion, a natural element of any nation. (Hamburg: 17 May 2013, original emphasis)

The above quote is noteworthy because it starts by removing the boundary between citizens by birth and citizens by application that was maintained throughout all other speeches. This was indeed the only instance when a ceremony speaker discursively included the audience in the imagined national community without drawing any distinctions between naturalized

‘new’ versus national-born old citizens by instead referring to ‘We Germans’. This integrative function of nationalism was, however, followed by the most explicitly formulated expectation that naturalized citizens should help to foster a new ‘national pride’. This call was based firstly on the problematization of national-born citizens who embraced racist ideas of ‘foreign infiltration’. Naturalized citizens were then constructed as candidates who are ideally suited to assist the re-integration of Neo-Nazis into wider society. This task should be accomplished by educating the previously misled national-born Germans that naturalized Germans in fact ‘master’ the German language and that they have ‘internalized the values and norms of our country as manifest in the constitution (*Grundgesetz*)’ (Hamburg: 17 May 2013). The neo-nationalism to be developed by naturalized citizens should thus serve as an antidote against the racism and xenophobia emerging among some groups of national-born citizens. In short, the neo-national aspect of the Super Citizen subjectivity was instrumental to maintaining, or renewing, the image of Germany as an anti-racist, liberal-democratic state of law. According to this rationality, racism was presented as being caused by individual, not structural, societal reasons, which made plausible the recommended solution to counter this problem. For the task to fight racism was handed to those who may (or may not) have personally experienced it themselves, namely the individual applicants, without mentioning the responsibilities of the national-born citizens or the state. The neo-national aspect of the Super Citizen was therefore linked to the neo-liberal referral of responsibility mentioned above.

Religion was a theme avoided by most speakers, and Islam was addressed only in the super-diverse local authority of Brent in the UK. All the British speeches finished with a (more or less similar) section reminding naturalized citizens to ‘respect’ the law, the democratic state, and human rights such as freedom of speech. In addition, one speaker regularly cited from the Quran to demonstrate that this ‘respect’ is compatible with Islam (Brent: 11 September 2012, 9 October 2012, 16 October 2012). By implication, the suggestion that new citizens should assess and, if necessary, re-adjust themselves to ensure that they ‘respect’ the law was aimed specifically at Muslim citizens.

## 5. Conclusion

This article has put forward two arguments, a theoretical one and an empirical one. Firstly, it has pointed out that naturalization procedures and their final element, citizenship ceremonies, not only separate migrant citizens from national-born citizens and further distinguish between migrants by including only successful candidates and excluding rejected applicants. They also produce a specific subjectivity, the Super Citizen. The Super Citizen suggests to migrant citizens that they should think of themselves as a political, economic and cultural asset to the nation-state, thus rendering them responsible for using this potential in the national interest. The Super Citizen seeks to activate naturalized citizens by encouraging them to take part in forms of civil engagement such as volunteering in schools or the fire brigade. It raises their aspirations to participate in politics using their right to vote. And it suggests types of self-conduct, such as to practise multiculturalism rather than assimilation. Naturalized citizens are thus called upon to act as, or modify themselves to become, role model citizens to other migrant and national-born citizens alike. The Super

Citizen thereby both further entrenches the internal hierarchies of nation-states and confirms the paradoxical nature of naturalization. In the ideology of the liberal nation-state, migrants are considered as both 'givers' and 'takers' (Honig 2001: 99), and as the source and solution of a problem. They trouble the national self-imagination as a community defined by birthright membership, yet resolve this issue by undergoing naturalization. The Super Citizen thus also coincides with a general, neo-liberal shift from a caring state to the expectation of individual duties, thereby shifting the responsibility to maintain public goods to naturalized citizens among others.

Second, as the multi-sited comparative research design demonstrated, elements of the Super Citizen call were found in all four research locations studied in the UK and Germany. The Super Citizen is therefore not confined to a specific nation-state or region, but crosses national borders. As Bröckling (2016: ix) recently pointed out: 'Calls to become a certain type of subject are as susceptible to globalization as anything else. Yet there are cultural colorations, path dependencies and nuances.' Likewise, the Super Citizen is a trans-national subjectivity which contains some national and local nuances. For example, within the political features of the Super Citizen subjectivity, the idea that naturalized citizens are equally 'now part of the sovereign' (Hamburg: 17 May 2013) alongside national-born citizens was more pronounced in the German ceremonies than in the UK ones. The economic aspect of the Super Citizen also showed some local differences in that migrants were conceptualized as workforce either through regular jokes about ceremony participants as local taxpayers in Brent in the UK or through the narration of past migration histories which had contributed to building local industries such as cotton and coal in Burnley or the harbour in Hamburg. The purported self-image of Britain and Germany as modern, progressive states implied that the role of these economies in the processes of exploitation, colonialism, and nation-building was suppressed and reframed as laying the foundations for modern, liberal, and diverse societies.

National nuances were observed in the interpretations of the cultural aspect of the Super Citizen. Speakers at the British ceremonies conceived the multiculturalism that newly-admitted citizens supposedly brought with them in terms of a diversity of culinary and religious lifestyles that blended in, or added to, the existing offer of restaurants and festivals, especially in Brent in the UK. By contrast, speakers in Germany interpreted multiculturalism as multilingual and intercultural knowledge skills, thus anticipating possible conflict mediation and parliamentary representative roles for newly-admitted citizens. The general assumption made in the British ceremony speeches was that naturalized citizens contribute to an already existing diversity, whereas in the German speeches there was a sense that Germany relies on 'new' citizens to grow and maintain a diversity which is yet to be fully realized. This different interpretation of multiculturalism may be interpreted, on the one hand, as a remnant of historically divergent models of citizenship—the British as an ethnically expansive imperial model, while the German has been ethnically restrictive and denied to 'guestworkers' (cf. Castles, de Haas and Miller 2014: 67; Bade 1992: 398–9). On the other hand, the lesser emphasis of multilingualism in British ceremonies may be related to the public debate in the UK about multilingual households (Byrne 2013). Moreover, national differences were also evident in the neo-nationalism expected from naturalized citizens. As in the UK, the Super Citizen was given a specific duty of royal loyalty while in Germany, the Super Citizen was assigned the task of opposing and/or re-integrating Neo-



Nazis. This reflects different specific self-understandings of the state: the UK as a monarchy, and Germany as breaking with its Nazi past, as well as how nation-state ideologies more generally adapt to transformations such as global migrations.

The material presented here clearly revealed that the local level of government reinforces the nation-state as local state representatives engaged (to a greater or lesser extent) in the Super Citizen call in their speeches. Whether introduced by the national level of government, as in the UK, or by local authorities, as in Germany, citizenship ceremonies did not develop in isolation but in the context of international developments and societal transformations brought about by migration, and the increasing diversity resulting from it. In suggesting a specific image of the state as a self-constituted, market-oriented, modern society, the ceremonies also serve as a means of self-identification as a Western liberal democracy.

While this article has focused on subject-formation attempts, the analysis of the speech acts left open the questions of how they were received and how the new citizens responded to them. The larger study that this article is part of suggests that the responses are ambivalent and that the citizenship tests and courses at the pre-application stage function as techniques in this subject-formation regime similarly to the ceremonies ([Badenhoop forthcoming](#)).

Finally, the structure of the citizenship ceremonies and the speeches suggest that the call to become Super Citizens is not the result of reciprocal dialogue but is, rather, an entirely external ascription. This ascription of the Super Citizen is problematic not only because it reproduces the division between citizens by birth and citizens by application, and further differentiates between migrants. As the subject-formation approach has demonstrated, the overburdening of naturalized citizens with a range of expectations to make good perceived or actual deficits of the state also runs the risk of reducing them to political, economic, and cultural ‘capital’ to be exploited by the nation-state.

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## Notes

1. All translations from German into English were made by the author unless otherwise indicated.
2. This document was published 25 July 2003, accessed 6 November 2012 and is no longer available online.
3. Wolfgang Wieland in plenary session protocol Nr. 16/174 of 16 September 2008. 16th legislative period, 174th session, 18613. <dipbt.bundestag.de/doc/btp/16/16174.pdf> accessed 12 January 2016.

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